

NEWARK UNIVERSITY



HIGH SCHOOL



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University High School is one of the unique academic initiatives existing in the system of public schools in Newark, New Jersey. Formerly known as School Within A School (SWAS), University High has earned distinction both locally and nationally through the success of its graduates in college programs.

The success of University High is a substantial educational statement which effectively rejects any stereotypic perception of the inner-city student. At the conclusion of the University High academic program, our students are well prepared for post high school studies. They are representative of the finest that the Newark Board of Education has to offer.

Your in-depth review of our programs at University High is welcomed and encouraged as we are deeply proud of the accomplishments of our students and staff. University High School's uncompromising diligence in advancing academic excellence is axiomatic. It is with a commitment to this excellence and to total human growth that the Newark Board of Education introduces you to this exciting program.

Carl Sharif
Carl Sharif, President
Newark Board of Education



BOARD OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE SUPERINTENDENT
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102



ALONZO KITTRELS
EXECUTIVE SUPERINTENDENT

University High School represents a new vision of public education. Since it began in September, 1969 the thrust has been the advancement of Newark's academically gifted youth. School-Within-A-School (SWAS), as University High was originally named, sought increased leadership and socialization opportunities for this City's gifted and talented. The curriculum of University High stresses the interdisciplinary nature of the science, literature and history. Students are provided with an opportunity to discover the structure of knowledge and its applications from antiquity to the present.

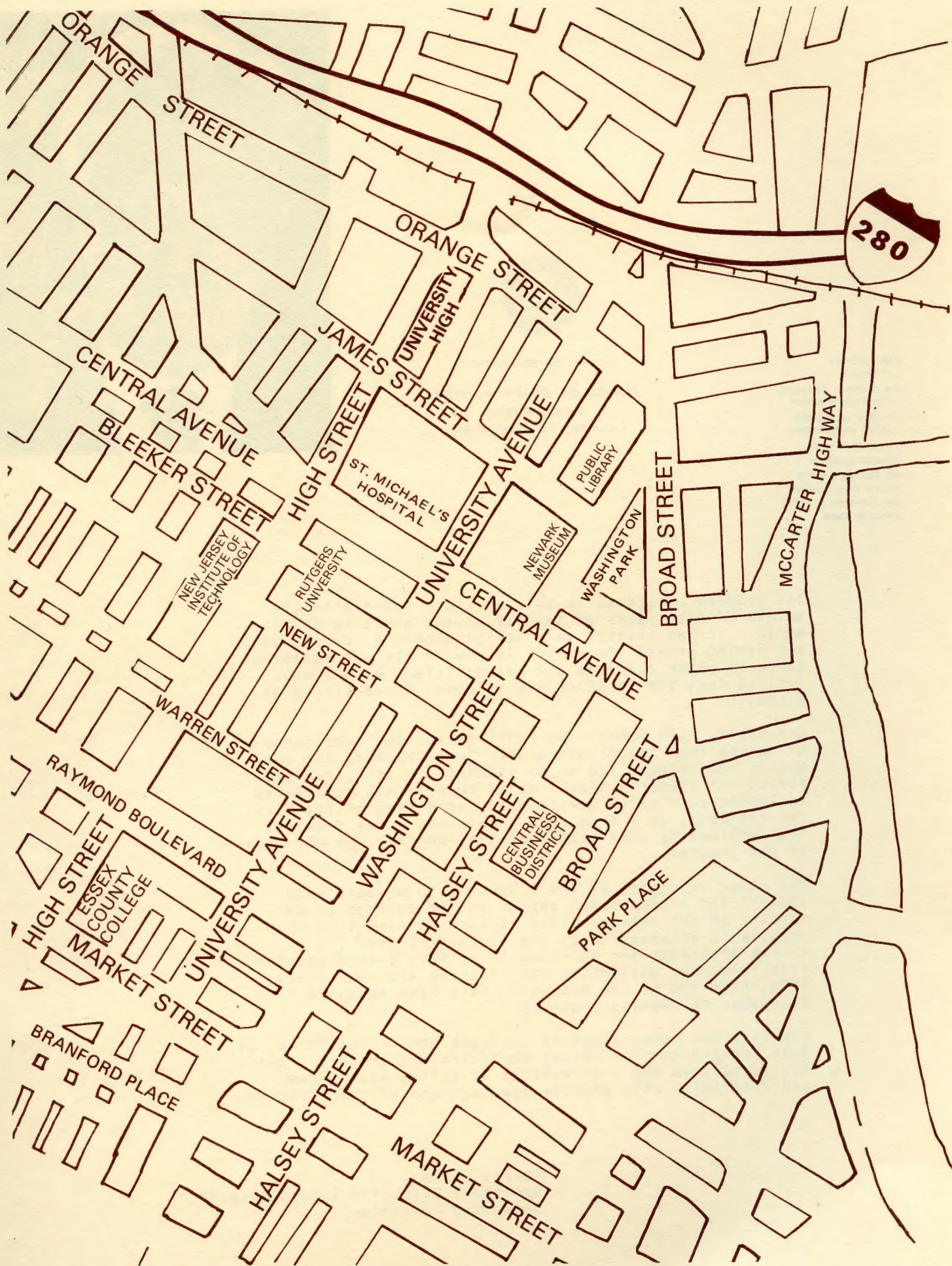
Innovative and experimental approaches to learning and teaching are encouraged so that students may benefit from different ways of acquiring new knowledge. Teachers pool their expertise and draw upon the wealth of community resources to offer a broader perspective for University High students.

In today's world and in preparation for the twenty-first century, special funds of knowledge will be required for leadership. We believe that University High School is preparing tomorrow's leaders for the roles they will have to play.

It is with pride and pleasure that I introduce the fine programs at University High School. As those of us in education make our moves to restructure schooling towards a more relevant experience for future generations, University High School will be our light in the forest.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Alonzo Kittrels". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "A".

Alonzo Kittrels,
Executive Superintendent



UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL

Can a student from the inner city, if given every opportunity during high school, overcome early educational deficiencies and gain admission to top colleges? And once there, can he or she stay and compete successfully with students from highly dissimilar backgrounds?

Historically, gifted and talented young people have had low priority in public funds allotted for education. According to a recent survey of New Jersey school districts, less than 6 per cent of the state's gifted students are identified and served in special educational programs. Thus, many of our young people are lost in a standard educational program.

In addition, public education in many of our larger cities has suffered various problems. In Newark, these problems include high absenteeism, low performance on standard reading and mathematics examinations and a high drop-out rate. These problems all point to the Newark system's inability to deal with talented students. However within Newark's inner city is a special high school for a small group of highly motivated and talented students — University High School.

University High utilizes flexible scheduling, interdisciplinary team teaching, independent study, and college-level courses to tap the potential of Newark's academically gifted youths.

Since its inception in 1969, University High School's record of achievements has been impressive. Some of the tangible evidence of the quality education of University High include:

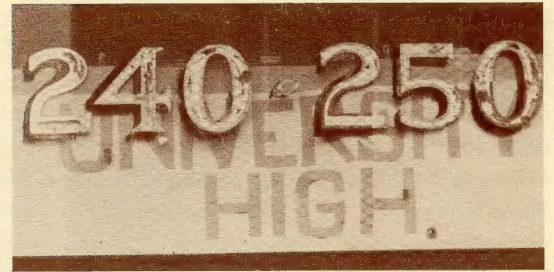
More than 98 per cent of its graduates have gone on to college: Princeton, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, MIT, Bucknell, Johns Hopkins, and others.

A study done by the Prudential Insurance Company showed that after four years, 88 per cent of its graduates are still in college or graduate school, or have completed post-high school education and are employed.

Its graduates win a disproportionately high number of state and academic scholarships based upon competitive examinations.

Its absentee rate is less than 5 per cent, well below the high school average in Newark.

It has been selected as a practice teaching site for the Rutgers University Teacher Intern program. Also, its educational program is frequently observed by outside agencies, foundations, and colleges.



When the school was founded, it functioned within Newark's Malcolm X Shabazz High School as the School Within A School Program (SWAS) until October, 1977. Then, with the assistance of Prudential Insurance Company, the program moved into its own facility at 240 High Street, in the midst of Newark's higher educational complex: Essex County College, Rutgers, and the New Jersey Institute of Technology. The name of the school was changed to University High, reflecting not only its proximity to local colleges, but underlining its purpose as a college preparatory school.

Furthermore, University High is situated within convenient walking distance of the public library, museum, municipal and county governmental agencies, a hospital, and the central business district of Newark. Often, the whole city is creatively utilized as the actual classroom.

University High is a small academic community with 450 highly motivated students. As a small academic community, some of its advantages include:

Students' individual abilities and needs are readily identified and fostered.

Interaction between students and faculty breed lasting friendships and supportive guidance.

Through continual contact with teachers, parents are well-informed about their children's progress.

Teachers play a large role in policy and curriculum decisions, thus promoting high teacher morale.

The flexibility of University High's scheduling encourages an openness and willingness to experiment with new ideas.

"... I discovered myself. I'll describe my sophomore year that way. I found out that not only was I capable of holding my own, but I was capable of excelling in University High (SWAS) and that was beneficial ..."

Marvin Comick, alumnus,
'77 graduate of Harvard University



What Does the School Offer?

Humanities Curriculum

The English and history curricula are frequently integrated, encouraging students to see the relationships of these disciplines through major historical and literary themes. Students explore ideas and forces that have shaped world cultures. Also, these forces of literary and historical movements are concurrently studied in art and music classes. In this way, students are enabled to understand the lifestyle of each era. One feature of University High's humanities curriculum is that Shakespeare's plays are read throughout the four years as an introduction to the literary classics and as a source of insight into human behavior.

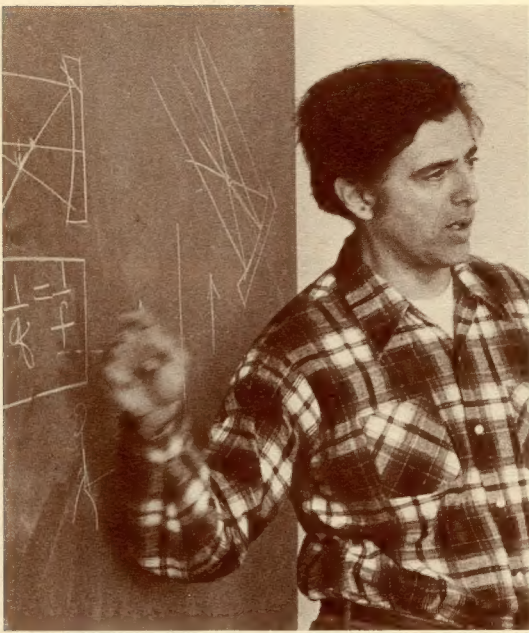
In the senior year, the humanities program offers a variety of six-week mini-courses with such topics as "Women: A Feminist Perspective," "Philosophy of Man," "Creative Writing," "Economics," "Introduction to Drama," "Impact of Colonialism on the Third World," and others.

During the four years the students' communication skills are developed through writing extensive research papers, presenting oral reports, and creating short stories and poetry.

"... I really started to learn when I came here (NJIT) in my senior year and we started taking calculus and physics. That, for me, was like a major experience because I guess I began to see where algebra fitted into everything, the whole scheme of learning other things and how courses build one on another..."

Sharon Harris, alumna,
'78 graduate of New Jersey
Institute of Technology





Math and Science Curricula

The mathematics and science curricula are also taught with the interdisciplinary approach. Algebra, geometry, trigonometry, probability, statistics, and calculus, offered in mathematics courses, are used to explain the theories demonstrated in biology, earth science, biochemistry, chemistry and physics classes.

University High offers advanced courses for its sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have strong mathematics interests.

Along with the regular mathematics program, a course designed especially to show the integral relationship between physics and calculus is offered by NJIT to University High seniors.

Foreign Language Curriculum

Every University High student studies four years of either French or Spanish through the latest techniques of aural-oral instruction, to insure fluency and idiomatic expression. Every summer the student is totally immersed in the language for at least one full week, to the exclusion of all other studies. This includes total absence of English in the classroom, and visits to the United Nations, films, and restaurants where the language is spoken.

Music and Art Curricula

The University High approach to music appreciation is different from that of regular schools. All students are required to learn an instrument, so they can experience music first-hand. In addition, students have the opportunity to perform in three groups — the choral group, the Recorder Ensemble and the University High-Science High cooperative marching band. These groups are regularly invited to perform throughout the city and state, and have won awards for excellence from various organizations.

As noted above, the art appreciation curriculum is often coordinated with the English, history and music courses. In the English and history classes, artistic and cultural developments are recognized within the context of their historical milieu. Frequently, the art classes produce art and background drops for musical and dramatic productions, so that students can have their art displayed and used.





Team Concept

The core of University High School's total curriculum is carried out via the grade team method. For each grade level, a team is formed of teachers from different subject areas. In the daily team meeting, an experienced teacher leads the team members in efforts to improve their effectiveness with their students. New schedules are formulated, trips are discussed, and new educational materials and ideas are reviewed.

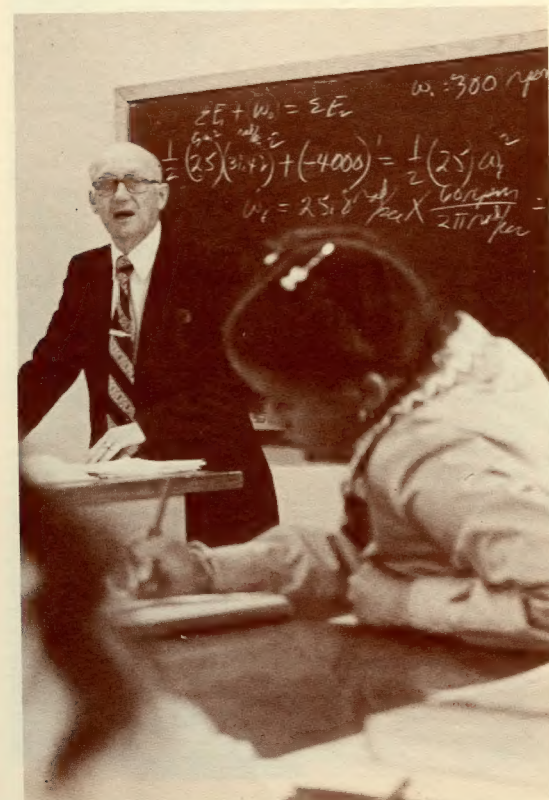
Parent-student conferences also are held at the team meeting, and group decisions regarding individual students are reached. Consequently, each teacher is made aware of each student's total educational development and can provide guidance to develop unique talents or spot an impending problem. The daily team meeting provides a particularly effective means of communication between parents, students and teachers.

The emphasis upon interdisciplinary teaching is also evident in the Oxford University Plan of Independent Study where students, with advice from the faculty, are encouraged to pursue their own interests through a program of study independent of the classroom. Often the students' interests cross through subject areas in a variety of ways. Projects may be related to fine arts, science, mathematics, literature, history, sports, cinema, psychological trends — channeling the students' creativity, academic motivation, and intellectual curiosity.

"... Care, concern or love ... It's not something that's institutionalized. The team concept reflects it. I think the concern that the teachers, the administrators, parents and everyone have is for the well-being of the students ... it's just a matter of different approaches, but the basic concern is the same — the concern for the student is always there ..."

Walter Genuario, math teacher





Enrichment Programs

A greatly enriched curriculum is provided by the involvement of local colleges, the business community, and public agencies. University High students participate in Rutgers University High School Scholars Program and take courses for college credits. In addition, New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) and Essex County College offer computer science courses. NJIT's Civil Engineering Department, in conjunction with Newark's Transportation Council and Engineering Department, has offered a traffic engineering course for sophomores and juniors.

Because University High School students are required to attend school 11 months a year, the summer session is devoted to an enrichment curriculum. Students are enrolled in competitive programs throughout the nation as well as at local colleges. Many of these summer programs, offered only to juniors and seniors, are sponsored by corporations. The summer programs have included:

- Actuarial Math (Prudential & Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Companies)
- Advanced Mathematics (NJIT & Burroughs Corp.)
- Advanced Placement Program (Cornell University)
- Business Management (Colgate University)
- Carnegie-Mellon Action Project
- Encampment for Citizenship (various sites in U.S.)
- Journalism (Blair Academy)
- Medical Studies for High School Students (Hahnemann Medical School, Philadelphia)
- M.I.T.E. — Minority Introduction to Engineering (Howard University, Lehigh University and Lafayette College)
- Ocean Environmental Studies (Stevens Institute of Technology)
- S.T.E.P. — Stevens Technical Enrichment Program (sponsored by Exxon)
- Humanities Program (St. Peter's College, Jersey City)
- Urban Engineering (NJIT & Exxon)

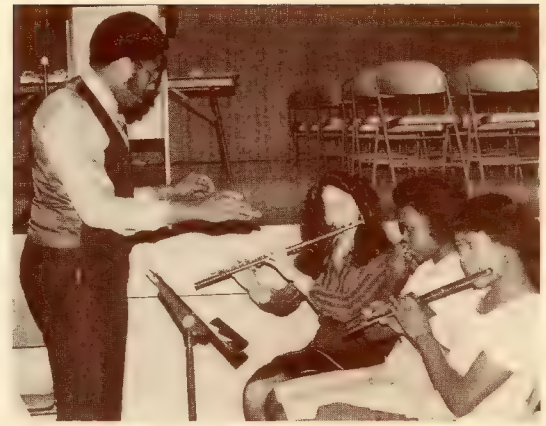
For those students who remain at University High, there are experimental programs like the Parkway Program, which utilizes local resources. The idea, which originated at the Parkway School in Philadelphia, is to eliminate the classroom walls and learn wherever possible — in museums, offices, hospitals, courtrooms, prisons, and the public library. For instance, as an integral part of a course on criminal justice, students visit the Essex County Courts, police stations and prisons. This "school-without-walls" approach provides real-life educational encounters.



How Are Students Selected?

Every February the guidance staff, teachers and students visit all of Newark's elementary and junior high schools informing prospective students about the various facets of the school, each telling the story from his or her own perspective. Their information includes the requirements of the school, the goals and structure of the program, and most importantly, what it takes to succeed. The students are required to face a battery of standardized mathematics and reading tests. In addition, many are required to have an interview with faculty. In each case, the prospective student's teachers and counselors are required to submit recommendations and offer information regarding the student's school activities.

This has produced a student body composed of young people who have demonstrated academic motivation, intellectual curiosity and high achievement during their elementary school years. Most have been leaders in school and community groups. Throughout their years at University High School, these students continue to excel through such extracurricular activities as sports, the marching band, the award-winning Recorder Ensemble, the University High Newsletter, cheerleading, and the Student Government Organization. Thus, the total University High experience develops their creative, intellectual and leadership potentials.



... And What About the Staff?

The success of University High is due in large measure to the spirit of enthusiasm and meshing of personalities of its faculty from the administrators, teachers, counselors to the nurse, cafeteria workers and security guards.

While the administrators perform the usual tasks, they are also involved in developing new programs, implementing the team teaching concepts, and working with the Parents' Organization, teachers, students, and the Advisory Board. The principal and vice principal are always available in their guidance and administrative capacities to students, parents, and teachers.





Teaching Staff

The constant reassessment by the teaching team of curricula and scheduling requires that teachers be not only well-versed in their discipline but also flexible. Further, because they face an extremely inquisitive and enthusiastic student body, the teachers must find new ways to present their information with depth and interest. The prospective teachers are screened by a committee composed of the administrators, representatives from the current teaching staff and parents, before recommendations are submitted to the Personnel Department of the Board of Education.

Guidance Staff

The counselors are the key people in recruiting students for the program. They visit the elementary school, test and evaluate students, and send out acceptance notices. Once the students are accepted and enter University High School, the counselors also take part in the team meeting and parent-student conferences. Furthermore, the guidance office is the students' most immediate source of information regarding college admissions, financial aid packages, and special competitive programs. If there are any questions or problems, the counselors frequently contact colleges to inquire about the students' status in the admissions process.



How are the Parents Involved?

University High parents have been extremely supportive of the school in raising funds, recommending curricula, and helping select teachers — a tangible extension of parental concern for their children. Monthly meetings of the Parents' Organization are well-attended and, in addition, individual student-parent conferences are often held to review the student's progress. If the child is having problems, the parent is encouraged to provide special guidance in the home. The cooperation of parents, teachers and students has been cited as one of the critical factors of University High's success.



How is the Community Involved?

The Advisory Board is composed of representatives from corporations, institutions of higher education, government, civic and cultural groups and alumni. It has initiated and implemented many enrichment programs. In addition to providing funds helping students to participate in various programs, many corporations have opened their facilities and provided expertise, services, and instruction.

Every summer since 1970, members of Prudential's Actuarial Division have offered a pre-actuarial course in which students study the mathematics of a life insurance policy — calculating the mortality tables and premiums and designing a computer program. Also, beginning in the summer of 1979, Mutual Benefit Life will offer a pre-actuarial course to complement Prudential's course.

Another crucial contribution of the Advisory Board was the development of a scholarship fund; this insures that no graduate be denied college because of a lack of money.

"Exciting as an example of what can be done, it's an example to those who should emulate it and it is an example of what people can accomplish given the opportunity. It is an example of caring, it's an example of the fact that when academic excellence is offered it can not only be appreciated, but assimilated."

Alice Shapiro, Chairwoman,
Advisory Board

Through the efforts of the private and public institutions on the Advisory Board the school has received a practical endorsement of its program. We have great confidence, not only in the direct benefits University High may provide to the students in the school, but also in the direct impact it may have in improving the life of Newark. Here we have the beginnings of a new Newarker — intelligent, inquisitive, and involved. With the continued assistance provided by business, universities and foundations, University High can continue to offer the experiences and challenges which make the future leaders of our community strong.





Marvin Comick graduated University High (SWAS) in the first graduating class of 1973. He went on to Harvard University where he received his B.A. degree in Urban Studies in June, 1977. Marvin has since returned to Newark and is presently working with the Urban Coalition. Also, he has plans to go to graduate school in Urban Planning.

"For me to describe my feelings about University High School is a complex task. This is due to the fact that I have viewed the program from three varying perspectives. First as a member of the first class of enrollees, then as a college student, and finally as a college graduate and a member of the University High School Advisory Board. I currently regard the program as the best that the Newark Board of Education has to offer.

I came to University High (SWAS) as a mischievous thirteen-year-old who was absolutely sure that I could do almost anything I wanted to do in school and still get straight A's. As the teachers who were around in 1969 will attest, I did not have the greatest attitude towards education. I had just completed eight years of grammar school that entailed little or no academic challenge. I was quite bored with the educational system and came to University High (SWAS) in dire need of a change of pace.

That first summer made it clear to me that I was taking part in a unique educational experience that would have a significant impact on the course of my life. For the first time, I was placed in a setting where everyone, in varying degrees, was committed to the goal of academic excellence.

Due to the fact that the program was in its embryonic stages there were a number of flaws that had to be ironed out. However, the attitudes of my fellow classmates, the SWAS administration, and faculty helped kindle in me a thirst for knowledge that has yet to be satisfied.

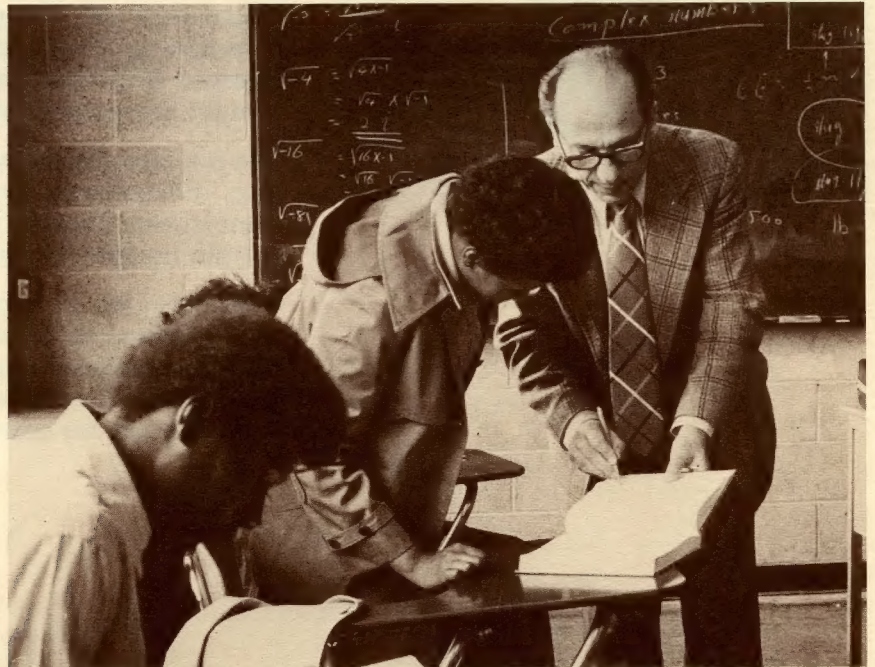
There were problems in those early years because the program was brand new and we had no precedent. I didn't realize the effects of these problems until I began my undergraduate education at Harvard University. I soon discovered that I was deficient in some of the basic skills necessary to successfully compete at an Ivy League institution. I felt overwhelmed by the amount of work I had to do and also by the nature of that work. The area where I was most deficient was in writing skills. During my first semester I had to write two 30-page papers, three 10-15-page papers, and six 5-page papers. Believe me, I was ready to pack my bags!

The only thing that saved me was my competitive spirit that was nurtured in the SWAS program. Although I was lacking in specific skills, I had developed invaluable study habits in my four years in SWAS. I had learned to stay with an assignment until it was completed. I assure you it was not easy. However I am sure that if it wasn't for my association with the SWAS program I would not have been able to stick it out.



The program has come a long way since that first summer in 1969. A significant advancement was the acquisition of its own building in 1977.

Autonomy is a necessity for the success of a program as innovative as that offered by University High School. I was honored to speak at the dedication of that building. The central theme of my speech sums up my current sentiments about University High School. I said then that due to the negative national image of Newark, it is difficult for the city to attract top flight talent from other areas. If Newark is to achieve the progress that I so strongly feel it will, the leadership and direction will have to come from within. University High is a significant step in that direction!"





Alexis Thurman is also a member of University High's (SWAS) class of 1973. Presently a mathematics teacher in the Irvington, New Jersey Public Schools System, Alexis received her B.A. degree and teaching certification from Rutgers University in mathematics. She is continuing her education in New Jersey Institute of Technology's Master's Program of Applied Science.

"Now that I am a college graduate, I often look back and ask myself — How did I ever survive such a rigorous mathematics program at Rutgers-Newark? My success as a mathematics major can be greatly accredited to the values that I obtained from the School Within A School Program, now called University High School.

Ever since I was a freshman in high school, University High (SWAS) encouraged me to be inquisitive, to take chances, to experience new things, and to overcome defeat, no matter how painstaking. I have found that these values are the very essence of educational growth. Life without them would remain in a state of stagnation, accomplishing nothing!

The philosophy of the University High (SWAS) program has also instilled within me the fact that life is too short to wait until opportunity knocks. Given a sturdy academic foundation, I should be able to create my own opportunities.

Now that I have become a mathematics teacher, I am passing along these same values to my seventh and eighth graders. I hope to prepare my students for high school as well as the University High (School Within A School) program has prepared me for college, or should I say, life in general."

This Booklet Prepared by Anna Eng
1973 University High School
1977 Princeton University

Designed by Ann Coleman